

STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC FACILITIES
SOUTHEAST REGION PLANNING

FAX

Friday, December 23, 2005

DELIVER TO: Jeff Ottesen

FAX #: 465-6984
TELEPHONE #: 465-6971
LOCATION JUNEAU, AK.

FROM: ANDY HUGHES

FROM FAX #: 1-907-465-2016
TELEPHONE #: 1-907-465-1776
LOCATION JUNEAU, ALASKA

SUBJECT: STIP Letters (Skagway)

NUMBER OF PAGES, INCLUDING COVER PAGE:

MESSAGE:

Jeff,

Transmitted are STIP Review and Comment Correspondence.

Thanks

Andy



CITY OF SKAGWAY

GATEWAY TO THE GOLD RUSH OF "98"

P.O. BOX 415, SKAGWAY, ALASKA 99840

(PHONE) (907) 983-2297

(FAX) (907) 983-2151

December 21, 2005

Mr. Andy Hughes

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

6860 Glacier Highway

Juneau, Alaska 99801-7999

Re: Draft 2006-2008 STIP

Dear Mr. Hughes:

We have reviewed the draft STIP, and like many communities, I am sure, we are equally concerned about what is on it as we are about what is not.

For years we have requested funding for our "Gateway Project". This project consists of pedestrian improvements from the Alaska Marine Highway terminal, along Broadway to the Skagway Historic District. At one time the National Park Service had provided matching funds for design and engineering for this project. The City of Skagway had, and still does, offered to provide the trees necessary for the landscaping. It enjoyed a brief showing on the STIP but was later dropped off.

By far the bulk of AMHS ridership in the Lynn Canal is pedestrian. However, the absence of sidewalks, or the inadequacy of those sections that do exist, force pedestrians into the street and pit them against the vehicular traffic generated by any vessel arrival and departure, along with other traffic, trains, bicycles, pedicabs and horse-drawn conveyances.

It is interesting to note that the draft STIP includes \$1 million in FY06 for a Skagway Sewage Utility at the AMHS Terminal. The City of Skagway has never been contacted regarding this facility. What we understand from your RFQ is that this could take the form of a vessel pump out facility with lift stations and forced mains to Skagway's wastewater treatment system and plant. Or, it could be a stand-alone facility that treats and discharges vessel wastewater directly into the canal.

In the first scenario, we are not sure that our wastewater treatment plant is capable of handling the anticipated volumes of sewage from these vessels. Additionally, we do not know who would be responsible for maintaining the infrastructure required to get the sewage from the float to the City's wastewater system, which is quite a distance away. Finally, the introduction of 4,000 gallons of salt water into our primary treatment facility could also be problematic.

In the second scenario, the City currently holds a wastewater discharge waiver for our own outfall near the ferry float. This permit requires constant monitoring of discharge levels. Our discharge and your discharge would be undistinguishable in these monitoring samples and will result in finger pointing if permitted discharge levels are exceeded.

The STIP also includes terminal modifications to allow for stern loading. The City of Skagway has not been contacted on this either. As we own 1/3rd of the float and the transfer bridge, consultation with the City on this project should have been imperative from the onset.

Given that we have not been consulted on these funded projects, and that our pedestrian need is one that has been identified far in advance of these issues, the City of Skagway strongly recommends that these be delayed to a future fiscal year budget, and that the relatively minor funding required for the Gateway Project be restored and the improvements completed beforehand.


Our second issue is one that is potentially more grave. Dyea Road safety improvements have also been part of STIP related projects. This draft STIP has no safety improvement dollars identified, except for a very small amount in FY06.

During the recent heavy rains that affected all of the northern panhandle, the Dyea Road suffered significant damage, and I fear weakening of the roadbed, particularly in the area of Hackett Hill. It is more critical now than ever that these safety improvements be completed. Traffic volumes on the Dyea Road continue to grow. The City of Skagway within the next two years will be offering municipal lands in the Dyea area for disposal, also contributing to this growth in vehicular traffic. This is not a project that can be forestalled until the next STIP process.

We are all aware that with the elimination of the earmarks for the Gravina Island Bridge and the Knik Arm Crossing that there will be a scramble for these millions of dollars. It is not our intent to pile on in this frenzy, but to remind DOTPF that many projects that have been on the STIP have disappeared. We feel that it is neither fair nor prudent to shelve important pre-existing needs for newer, larger and more glamorous projects.

The City of Skagway sincerely hopes that you will reconsider the elimination of these two projects of import to Skagway, and defer the AMHS terminal projects until accommodation can be made with the City of Skagway.

Sincerely,



Robert W. Ward Jr.,
City Manager

Cc: Mayor and Council
Senator Albert Kookesh
Representative Bill Thomas
Governor Frank Murkowski
ADOTPF Commissioner Barton